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## THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

National Intelligence Officers

20 May 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence  
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

VIA : Deputy Director for National Foreign Assessment  
National Intelligence Officer for Warning

FROM : [REDACTED]  
Acting Assistant National Intelligence Officer for USSR-EE

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SUBJECT : Monthly Warning Assessment: USSR-EE  
(Meeting held on 19 May 1981)

The Lebanon Crisis

1. The Soviets probably believe that, on balance, a limited conflict between Israel and Syria will benefit the interests of the USSR. Continued conflict, the Soviets probably assume, will strengthen Assad domestically and increase Syrian dependence on the USSR, polarize the Arabs behind Syria and the United States behind Israel -- thus weakening US influence, and force Sadat to abandon Camp David or impede his efforts to break out of Egypt's diplomatic isolation in the Arab world. The Soviets are actively attempting to discredit Ambassador Habib's mission and prevent successful US mediation of the dispute. However, the Soviets are wary of an extension of the conflict into Syria, which could escalate into a confrontation between the USSR and the United States.

2. The Soviets have given substantial, but not unqualified, diplomatic and political support to Syria. [REDACTED]

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3. Both the Soviets and the Syrians apparently assume that if armed conflict occurs it will be contained in Lebanon, with little likelihood of an Israeli ground attack on Syria across the Golan Heights. Probably the Soviets would not be surprised at an Israeli air strike against SAM sites or airfields inside Syria, but would distinguish this sharply from a ground attack on Syria.

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5. Opinion within the Community is divided as to Soviet influence over the Syrian emplacement of SAMs in Lebanon. Some perceive a high degree of Soviet control or authorization of this move, where others see the Soviets essentially reacting to events and playing catch-up to autonomous actions by Assad.

6. In the event of an Israeli attack on the SAM sites (either in Lebanon alone, or in Lebanon and Syria), the Soviets would undoubtedly resupply the Syrians with missiles -- as they have promised to do. They would also probably step up naval activity in the eastern Mediterranean. Under certain conditions -- especially a completely successful Israeli knockout of SAMs in Lebanon, a rapid and successful Israeli ground attack in Lebanon, or a knockout of SAM sites and aircraft in Syria itself, the Soviets would probably feel compelled to provide additional military assistance to Syria. This might take the form of a Soviet-manned air defense package, and even several Soviet MIG squadrons. Failure to supply such additional assistance could undermine Soviet influence in Syria and with other Arab states. Should Israel attack Syria across the Golan Heights, the Soviet response would probably escalate correspondingly.

7. In reacting to Israeli military moves, the Soviets would probably respond in stages: redeployment of the Mediterranean squadron and reenforcement of it from the Black Sea fleet; initiation of forceful communications to the United States aimed at bringing US pressure to bear on Israel; military resupply of Syria; and then, later, an alert of Soviet airborne forces. Regardless of how far Israel went, some sort of Soviet military response could be anticipated.

#### Poland

8. It is clear that since mid-April moderates have prevailed within both the Polish Communist Party and Solidarity, and have worked to prevent

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conflict from getting out of hand. The regime appears to be committed now to conducting serious negotiations with Solidarity, and businesslike talks are underway.

9. Those small conflicts which have occurred since mid-April have been defused; but such conflicts -- especially ones involving local police actions -- are capable of cropping up at any time or any place. Both Solidarity and the central authorities have worked very hard to contain them.

10. The key forthcoming event in Poland remains the Party Congress, scheduled for mid-July. Pressure for reform in the Party is strong, but we do not know how the reformers are faring in the elections now underway -- and may not have a much clearer idea until the Congress actually opens. Likewise, we do not have good information on the election of delegates to the Solidarity Congress, scheduled for August. Replacement of the more militant elements in Solidarity could take a number of years.

11. Cardinal Wyszynski's death is imminent. A period of national mourning could last 30-45 days, and dampen down conflicts within Polish society. The succession to Wyszynski will be worked out between the Polish Episcopate and the Vatican; the Polish government is unlikely, at the present juncture, to court popular ill-will or resistance from the Church by attempting to stall or intervene by exercising its veto power.

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13. There have been few authoritative public expositions of the USSR's position on developments in Poland, and little treatment of the really key issues such as the election of delegates to the Party Congress or reform within the Party. We do not see the sort of media buildup that might be anticipated as a signal of a Soviet intervention before the Congress.

#### Central America

14. Despite some evidence of persisting interest in stimulating near-term revolutionary change in Central America, the Soviets appear to have been behaving more prudently than they were at the beginning of this year, and are assigning higher priority to developing state-to-state relations

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in the region. As elsewhere in Latin America, they are focussing attention on large countries (such as Mexico) with the intention of increasing the latters' independence of, and opposition to, US policies.

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